

## COCOONING COMES TO THE BREAD BASKET

you wonder why you are the only  
friday night customers in the  
pizza place in wheatfield,  
wyoming, since it is one of

a handful of places to eat in  
wheatfield, but you don't

really mind because it allows  
your kids to play the juke

box and video games and generally  
let off car-trapped steam without

bugging anybody, but then you  
notice that both the take-out

window and the video store next  
door are doing what used to be

called in these parts a  
land-office business.

## THIS SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT SOMETHING

at the motel-6  
in rock springs, wyoming,

which may be the ugliest motel-6  
in america,

and which has been erected on one  
of the ugliest pieces of real estate  
on earth, one of god's undeniable  
outright aesthetic failures,

a junction where the ugliness factor  
has been raised exponentially by its  
having been converted into the most  
crowded truck-stop in this part of  
the great american west,

and which on this particular sunday  
is housing returnees from the annual  
bikers' rally at sturgis, south dakota,

many of whom seem to have flunked both  
the i.q. and personal appearance segments  
of the hell's angels multi-phasic entrance exam,



i am not even among  
the top ten fattest people  
in the commemorative postage-stamp pool.

#### I'LL PACK ANOTHER ON OUR NEXT TRIP

near the end of the trip  
my wife discovers that i have  
been carrying in my bag for over  
three weeks a new somewhat flattened  
spare roll of toilet paper.

this discovery excites shimmering mirth.

as for me, i can't think of anything,  
booze not excluded,  
that i would less like to run out of,  
or have to beg for.

#### WHY I GO TO ART EXHIBITS

it isn't because the originals are always  
superior to their reproductions: some  
are; some aren't. sometimes the galleries  
are inappropriately lighted. almost  
always they are overcrowded, and the  
stagewhispers are ludicrous. usually  
one searches in vain for a place  
to rest one's ass.

it isn't just because, afterwards, we  
treat ourselves to meatloaf, borscht,  
stuffed cabbage rolls, pirogi at  
gorky's cafe by the deserted flower markets.

it isn't even that i drive us home  
on surface roads through neighborhoods  
we otherwise would have no knowledge of.

it isn't even that i cherish these  
rare days alone with my daughter,  
my son, my wife.

it's that for a few suspended moments i  
am inches away from a piece of cloth  
that has somehow, through the mysteries  
of commerce, compromise, and coincidence

made its way to me from the human being  
who worked with it. it is a relic and  
talisman, more authentic than  
the shroud of turin.